

# Abraham Lincoln

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GRAND ARMY HALL AND  
MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION  
OF ILLINOIS—FEB. 12, 1917

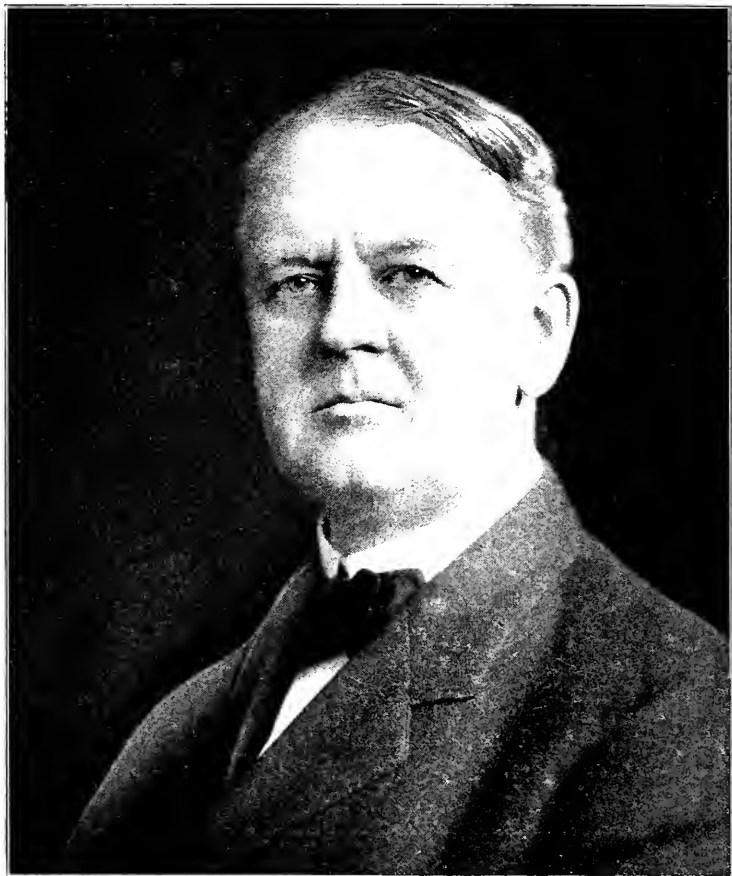
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**ST. GAUDEN'S STATUE OF LINCOLN**  
**LINCOLN PARK, CHICAGO**





*Charles S. Huntington*

THE GRAND ARMY HALL  
AND  
MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION OF ILLINOIS

# LINCOLN BIRTHDAY SERVICE

ADDRESS BY  
HONORABLE CHARLES SIDNEY CUTTING

ADDRESS BY  
MISS CAROLINE M. McILVAINE  
LIBRARIAN CHICAGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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MEMORIAL HALL  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1917  
2:30 O'CLOCK P. M.





## ORDER OF EXERCISES.

"The Assembly" . . . . . James R. Thacker

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Invocation . . . . . Rev. Duncan C. Milner

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"Battle Hymn of the Republic" . . . . .  
Solo by Mr. G. Magnus Schultz; Chorus by audience

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Reading of President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address  
. . . . . Col. Geo. V. Lauman.

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"The Old Folks at Home," . . . . . Foster  
Mrs. Else Harthan Arendt.

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MAJ. GEORGE MASON, PRESIDENT: Everywhere in our land there is an ever growing number who honor on this day the memory of that wonderful man Abraham Lincoln. Many years ago this Association thought it incumbent on them to render some tribute, in some fitting way, to his memory. Annually thereafter we have met in this hall and listened to the conception of his character and the place he filled in the life of this nation; and each time we have gone away filled with new thought and a greater admiration for that god-like man.

Today I have the pleasure and the honor of presenting to you the Honorable Charles Sidney Cutting, who will now address you.

## ADDRESS BY THE HONORABLE CHARLES SIDNEY CUTTING

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: Before beginning any formal address on this occasion I desire to express my full appreciation of the honor of being called upon to address an Association of this character, and doubly so at this time when at least something of the high honor, the unsullied patriotism and the magnificent bravery of the times which made these men famous is likely to be again required by their country. On these days in February of this year of our Lord, there can be no mistake that patriotic Americans should again revive the spirit of 1861, which breathes the spirit of Abraham Lincoln. (Applause.)

That anyone should hope to say something as yet unsaid on the life and times of Abraham Lincoln is beyond belief. The story of the life of the great emancipator, poetically romantic as it is, has been told so many times, and in so many ways that the American citizen who is not familiar with all its various phases is hard to find. I have no such hope today. I cannot expect to do more than to recall to the recollection of this audience some of the things which have made the name of Lincoln immortal.

Sixty years ago there lived in Springfield, Illinois, a somewhat well known lawyer in the circuit in which he practiced and, in a less degree, in the state within which he lived. He was then the typical self-made, professional man of the American frontier. As we all know, born of the poorest parents, nurtured in penury, educated in spite of and not by reason of the schools, he had practiced law with success, had studied much without instruction, had dabbled in politics, so that

he had a local reputation in that behalf, but was practically unknown outside of his own particular circle. He had been nominated as a Whig elector, but he had neither elected anyone, nor been elected himself.

It is more than probable that at that stage, in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred fifty-seven, ten thousand lawyers in the United States were, so far as the public knew, as well supplied and equipped politically, and far better equipped educationally, for a great governmental position as was Abraham Lincoln.

The mute inglorious Miltons die mute, unless their genius is awakened by some great event, some strong emotion, or some great desire. It required a practical repeal of the Missouri Compromise, which had lulled to rest the consciences of a great people to arouse the country lawyer of 1857. He was a Whig. He believed in the Union. He was opposed to the extension of slavery, and he believed that the Douglas proposition, which was crystallized under that war cry of "squatter sovereignty" was not only an improper repudiation of a solemn compact, but was a direct invasion of the rights of the free states.

It is a curious fact that the people of his time seemed to see no incongruity in the proposition that the extension of slave territory was a mere matter to be determined by a popular vote of the white inhabitants of the territory, as proposed by Douglas. That there was no inherent wrong in slavery and that the black man in matters of this kind was entitled to no more consideration than any other chattel seems to have been generally accepted; although the awakening consciences of the people found expression through Lincoln in the great debates when he

accused Douglas of failing utterly to comprehend that the negro was a human being. (Applause.)

It seems almost impossible, and it comes ordinarily to an audience as a shock, when a speaker in this day and generation says to an audience, as I say to you, that only fifty-five years ago, human beings were sold as chattels within the confines of the United States of America. The younger generation fails utterly to comprehend this fact. You and I know that it was so.

At the time of which I speak, I think it may truthfully be said that Abraham Lincoln had not been really aroused until his political birth in a national sense which occurred on the seventeenth day of June, 1858, when he made that memorable address at Springfield, which furnished Judge Douglas with his principal text in the great series of debates which followed.

Can it be possible that there is any significance in the fact that June 17th is the anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill, and that the freedom from foreign domination which followed as a necessary and logical result of that battle was paralleled by the freedom of a race from bondage, which, as I read my history, began on the same day of the same month when Abraham Lincoln made his Springfield speech?

On that day the Republican State Convention of Illinois named as their candidate for United States Senator, Abraham Lincoln; and, in his speech of acceptance, which followed, he used language which was alternately used by his opponents and by his friends, the one, of course to condemn, and the other to praise; and among the many undying statements of the great President perhaps none are more pregnant with results

for the future than these phrases from the address, referring to the Douglas Bill, which in effect repealed the Missouri Compromise, and left Kansas and Nebraska to be either slave or free, as should be determined by the settlers therein. He said:

"We are now far into the fifth year since a policy was initiated with the avowed object and confident promise of putting an end to slavery agitation. Under the operation of that policy that agitation has not only not ceased, but has constantly augmented. In my opinion, it will not cease until a crisis shall have been reached and passed. 'A house divided against itself cannot stand.' I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward until it shall become alike lawful in all the states, old as well as new, north as well as south."

This pronouncement was bitterly assailed by Douglas as a denial of popular sovereignty. With all the eloquence and persuasive power which the Senator from Illinois possessed in a remarkable degree, he upheld what he termed the right of the people to rule, and claimed that any artificial barrier, such as the Missouri Compromise, was a direct denial to the people of the right to determine their own future. When he was criticized for his advocacy of the doctrine announced by the Supreme Court in the Dred Scott Decision, because it seemed to conflict with the lan-

guage of the Declaration of Independence that all men are created equal, he replied with Chief Justice Taney, that these words in the immortal Declaration were used with reference to the British subjects who were then in America, or might thereafter come, and that they had no relation to any other people whatever. Mr. Justice Curtis, in his dissenting opinion in the Scott case, pointed out the fallacy of this reasoning, both as to the intention of the framers and as to the fact that only British subjects came within the purview of the Declaration. But such was the decision and such decision, absurd as it now appears to us, was actually advocated by Judge Douglas.

Lincoln was assailed on every side for his bold statement that this country cannot exist half slave and half free, and his opponents insisted that that statement meant war between the states. To that Lincoln at this time announced, as he said in his Chicago speech in the July following the Springfield Address, "I have said a hundred times that I am not in favor of invading the slave states or interfering with their domestic affairs." But, with equal vehemence he asserted that he was opposed to the extension of the slave power.

At this time the position of Lincoln was with neither wing of public sentiment. The ultra abolitionist would have none of him, because he did not favor immediate abolition, and because he had advocated a bill relative to the slave trade in the District of Columbia, which permitted bona fide owners of slaves from states where slavery was lawful, to bring slaves into the District without danger of their escape, he was denounced by Wendell Phillips as the slave hound of Illinois.

It was well understood everywhere that he did not believe in the institution of slavery; but it must have been equally well understood, from the constant repetition of the statement in his speeches, that he was not an advocate of immediate or forceful emancipation at the time of which we speak. His opponents challenged his declaration that a house divided against itself must fall, and that a country could not exist half slave and half free, by citing the fact that the Republic had existed for more than 80 years at that time half slave and half free. But he replied in effect that although these were the formative years of the Republic's existence, they were filled with problems relating to the organization and development and the improvement of our governmental ideas, and the opening of a great territory to settlement, yet, even in those times, from the very beginning, the friction between the believers in slavery and in freedom had never been wanting, and had become greater and greater with the lapse of time. With prophetic eyes he saw it was then acute, and although his friends, timid as politicians always are, predicted his political downfall because of this statement, it is more than likely that he lost the election as Senator by reason of it, yet he was eventually made President of the United States by reason thereof, in the great emergency. (Applause.)

Lincoln, profound student of American history that he was, understood perfectly that the union of the States, while politically accomplished, had never been in fact brought about. He understood well that the civilization of Virginia, which was slave holding, neither coalesced with nor sympathized with the Puritan civilization of New England, which was non-slave

holding; that, while Massachusetts and South Carolina were bound together by the Constitution of the United States, one of them regarded that Constitution as indissoluble, the other that it could be abrogated at pleasure; one conceived the Union to be perfect and everlasting, and the other that it existed only at the pleasure of its component parts; and so long as the property interests of one section were in direct and irreconcilable conflict with the desires of another section, he knew that there never could be the homogeneous state to which all patriotic Americans then and now look forward. Hence he said the country could not exist half slave and half free.

But great as the publicity was which was given to this noble utterance at Springfield, it too paled into insignificance beside the great debate of 1858 between Douglas and Lincoln. This episode has been fully discussed and has been so analyzed and has been the subject of so many criticisms that it is quite beyond the province of this Address to do more than to allude to it and some of the results which followed. The sentiment of the Springfield address was woven into it and about it. While Lincoln's adverse critics have some ground for asserting that Lincoln, in response to popular sentiment, rather modified his Springfield utterance, yet it must be conceded on a careful examination of all his speeches that he adhered to the underlying fact and preached anew the theory that he based thereon.

In this time, or in some times when no great question such as that of human slavery excites the minds and stimulates the imagination of our public men, we look with awe and wonderment upon this early period of our state's history, when our people, few in numbers,



separated by distances, and unconnected by means of rapid transportation, nevertheless, came together in great numbers at certain places within our borders to listen to the inspired words of great debaters, who discussed in their presence, with consummate skill, the questions of the hour. The newspaper had not then taken possession of every hearthstone. Men did not mingle with their fellow citizens a hundred miles away with any frequency. To attend the Legislature at the Capitol was frequently a week's journey from certain portions of the State; but, the power of oratory, the effect of debate, the result of discussion face to face with the electorate were wonderful. We may well doubt whether we have substituted that which could determine the great questions then determined as perfectly as did our forefathers.

All this is really preliminary to the real purpose, perhaps, of this Address, which is to show in some sense the place of Abraham Lincoln in history, not altogether as viewed by the people of the United States, but the people of the world, which is perhaps the most marvelous thing connected with this marvelous man.

I have detailed those events which tended most strongly to make Lincoln a ready talker, a careful thinker and an accomplished local statesman. But, the historian, I think, will look in vain at any of this preliminary time for facts or events which seemed to indicate that there was adequate preparation for his entry into the great world of politics, where he was destined to shine with a brilliancy even greater than that which made him our domestic hero.

Most of us doubtless can recall the circumstances of his entering into Washington after his election.

practically in disguise; at least, many who were looking for him with malicious intent failed to recognize the newly elected President of the United States as he rode through hostile Baltimore into lukewarm Washington.

It is certain that no man ever went to the Presidential chair who inspired less confidence in his ability in the great emergency which had arisen than did Lincoln in the minds of the managers and chiefs of the party which elected him. He had magnanimously and most wisely chosen as his chief advisers the very men who had been his opponents before the Republican Convention at Chicago. He had placed at the head of the Department of Foreign affairs, which, at that time required the most skillful diplomacy with the most careful weighing of events, in order to avoid foreign complications which would have been fatal to the cause of the Union, the accomplished diplomat and the astute politician, William H. Seward.

Abraham Lincoln, the tall, ungainly Illinoisan, having never received the approval, either professionally, individually or politically, of the dominant East, was the subject of much concern and grave doubts on the part of his advisers, and those whom they most directly represented. It was feared first that he would be but clay in the hands of the skillful political potters who surrounded him, second, that he was utterly lacking in all the arts and knowledge of diplomacy; third, that he would be far too radical, and, fourth, that he would be much too conservative, and each one of the holders of these irreconcilable beliefs was accompanied by many others, patriotic Americans, well-wishers of this country, who shook their heads in despair at the thought that a man so little prepared

should be selected in the greatest civic crisis which our history has ever produced.

Scarcely had the new President been seated when the question of ascendancy in the Cabinet arose, and it was discussed throughout the administration and long after as to whether or not Seward or Stanton was the ruling power in the cabinet; and, while at first this discussion even included the name of Lincoln, those familiar with the administration in latter times dropped the name of the President, for, as a writer of those times has well said: "No one who was familiar with the secrets of the administration could well doubt that in critical issues the uncouth Western statesman, unused to power; asserted and maintained his inherent, as well as his official supremacy."

We all remember that in a short time, less than two months after the inauguration of the President, Mr. Seward is said to have called the President's attention to the fact that the administration had not yet formulated any definite and distinct policy; that, in fact, they were drifting and that, in his opinion, it was very necessary that some plan of operation be agreed upon; and tendered to the President his good offices, which he is said to have accompanied by the statement, owing to the President's lack of experience, he made bold to suggest these things. The story is that the President replied genially, but in effect, though not in words, that when he needed Mr. Seward's suggestions on matters of that kind, he would ask for them in the usual way. (Laughter and applause.)

That he dominated Seward diplomatically is susceptible of documentary proof, and, although the instance has been used many times, it is such a demon-

stration of Lincoln's power, his ability, his education and his grasp of diplomatic subjects, that I cannot refrain from referring briefly to it.

Those of us who are old enough, remember the incidents which led up to the time of the Mason and Slidell affair, when the British steamer Trent had been stopped and these rebel emissaries removed therefrom, and the still earlier time when questions relating to the blockade of the Southern ports which deprived Great Britain of her cotton supply, were irritating that nation. A diplomatic crisis had arrived. Mr. Charles Francis Adams was envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to Great Britain, and it seemed quite certain that if that nation recognized the Southern Confederacy as a belligerent it would result in all probability in its establishment as a nation.

It was a subject, therefore, that required the greatest care in its handling at London; for, while we could concede no violation of our rights, we must not needlessly provoke the intervention of a great power. Mr. Seward, as Secretary of State, prepared a lengthy letter of instructions to Mr. Adams, and submitted it to the President. It is an interesting historical fact that this document is still in existence, with the President's amendments in his own handwriting thereon. Mr. Seward was thoroughly exasperated at the situation. He wrote a caustic and a biting letter, which, although it was not intended to be shown to the Foreign office in London, was, nevertheless, in spirit a challenge to the British Government to declare war. A dictatorial peremptory despatch was almost sure to involve us in difficulties abroad; and it is a notable fact that, in the amendments, which the President made, he is no way detracted from the

virility of the document, but at the same time took out the sting, which would have been provocative of dire results. For example, Mr. Seward wrote: "British recognition would be British intervention to create within our territory a hostile state, by overthrowing the Republic itself."

Mr. Seward further wrote: "When this act of intervention is distinctly performed, we from that hour shall cease to be friends and become once more as we have twice been, the enemies of Great Britain."

This last sentence was stricken out by the President. Mr. Seward wrote:

"The dispute will be between the European and the American branches of the British race. All who belong to that race will especially deprecate it as they ought. It may well be believed that men of every race and kindred will deplore it. A war not unlike this between the same parties occurred at the close of the last century. Europe atoned by forty years of suffering for the crime that Great Britain committed in provoking that incident."

Mr. Lincoln amended the last sentence so that it ran: "Europe atoned by forty years of suffering for that error." It is not difficult to see what the effect of criticising the British policy as a crime would have been.

But no less interesting than these evidences of diplomatic caution, at a time when caution was most necessary, are the evidences that the President was a great master of the language he spoke, even though he saw fit to hesitate amending the language of the erudite Seward. Mr. Seward wrote: "If that nation will now repeat the same great crime." Mr. Lincoln

changed it so that it read: "If that nation shall now repeat the same great error," not only removing the unnecessary imputation connected with and contained in the word "crime," but making a grammatical amendment in accordance with the usage of good English, by substituting "shall" in that connection, for the "will" which Mr. Seward himself wrote.

These things occurred in the early days of the administration. At that time, as Mr. Seward wrote in his despatch, describing the condition of the Southern Confederacy, "It has never won a field; it has no forts that were not virtually betrayed into its hands, or seized in breach of trust; it commands not a single port on the coast, nor any highway out from its pretended capital by land." But, alas, before the turn of the tide in 1863, many a field had been won, many forts had been captured, ports had been opened to its commerce by the Southern Confederacy, and it is difficult to understand how any man could have stood up against disaster piled on disaster, defeat following defeat, as did Lincoln in the two years which followed. He had begun his administration, as he said in his first inaugural, with a firm desire and purpose to preserve the Union with all its incidents, including even slavery, where slavery had been lawfully established. He, of course, did not approve of slavery in the abstract, but he believed that his oath of office required that he should restore and preserve, if he could, the Union as it had been handed to him until by the ordinary legal processes its organic law had been changed. It is within the memory of some of us who are here today, with what great emotion many of the more radical supporters of Lincoln criticised him most severely for not acting at once and peremp-

torily in the matter of slavery and how the more conservative criticised him with no less bitterness, because he did the things he did, as being unwarranted by the Constitution and the laws, and particularly because they seemed to involve the coercion of a sovereign state.

In the midst of these difficulties, when our arms were having but indifferent success and there was much dissension at the North, only the saving sense of humor of the President seemed to prevent his utter collapse. Of course, a thousand stories have been told and attributed to Lincoln of which he never heard; but there are enough that are authentic to show that the mind quick to observe analogies and to apply circumstances was always with him. In about the darkest time of the Rebellion, when all loyal hearts were beating in dumb expectation of some disaster, we were even then visited on this Continent by Europeans, who, if from the titled class, usually sympathized strongly with the South. Lowell tells of an English gentleman who called upon him, as he states it, apparently for the sole purpose of informing him that he, the visitor, was a strong partisan of the South, and who assured him he felt that the North could never subdue them and remarking incidentally and in perfect good faith: "They are the gentlemen of the country, you know."

About this time, the Marquis of Hartington, afterwards the Duke of Devonshire, appeared in this country. He was a young man of about 30 years. With the prevailing notion of Europeans as to the total lack of refinement on the part of our American President, he desired to be presented to him that he might observe for himself the type of civilization with which we clothed our Presidents. You will remember the

days when the stories of Mrs. Partington were common. She, you will recall, was a sort of physical Mrs. Malaprop. Her fame began with the story told by Sidney Smith to illustrate the ultra conservative position of the English House of Lords. He said that on a certain occasion, when a tremendous storm beat upon the coast of England, Mrs. Partington, whose cottage faced the sea, finding that the waves were invading her premises, appeared at the door with mop and broom to sweep back the Atlantic Ocean. It is needless to say that with all her efforts and all her energy the Atlantic triumphed and she was driven from her house on the beach. From that time on Mrs. Partington was to Englishmen the symbol of all that was ultra conservative, fussy and impracticable. So, when the Marquis of Hartington was presented, Mr. Lincoln, who knew that his Lordship had had the exceedingly bad taste to appear in public in New York, and even at a dinner given in his Honor, with a Confederate Flag in his buttonhole, he was received with great courtesy and much affability by the President, whose demeanor towards his guest was the very acme of deferential politeness—with one sole exception. Mr. Lincoln persisted in calling his distinguished guest "Mr. Partington," and although corrected, seemingly without effort fell into the error again of repeating the name of the consort of the lady who tried to sweep back the Atlantic Ocean. (Laughter and applause.)

A distinguished American writer, James Russell Lowell, in commenting upon the incident, has said: "Truly, the refinement of good breeding on the part of Mr. Lincoln could go no further; giving the young man his real name already notorious in the newspapers would have made his visit an insult."



It is very strange, but perhaps we ought not to wonder at it, that every disparaging sentiment spoken of Lincoln by his political opponents was eagerly adopted as a true statement of affairs, and a fair description of the chief executive by most Europeans. Schooled as they were in the belief that the right to rule was hereditary and could only come through the generations, but by special training as well, for high office, they caricatured, criticized, and held up to ridicule the struggling American who was endeavoring to fulfill the oath of his office, to preserve the Union and to hand down his country intact to coming generations.

The fact that all Europe had always sneered at American professions of freedom, by pointing to African slavery, seemed in no way to turn their sympathies in favor of that portion of the country which was endeavoring to abolish slavery. The very men who had spoken the most strongly against the institution of slavery seemed to be the strongest partisans in favor of the Confederacy. In one breath they would condemn slavery and in the next commend the men who were endeavoring to found a nation on human servitude. Even to this day, when the bitterness of the struggle has passed away, when we are able to discuss these questions, without that tremendous sense of responsibility which covered us all in the days of the war, it is difficult to understand the type of reasoning which, at one time, made even the great Gladstone, anti-slavery zealot though he was, a Southern sympathizer. When, however, Vicksburg had been captured and Gettysburg had been won, and the tide of battle seemed to turn in favor of the Northern arms, when, in spite of the gloomiest fore-

bodings the President had been re-elected in 1864, with renewed vigor, with a spirit chastened no doubt, but still filled with a holy resolution, on the 4th of March, 1865, he expressed, as only he could, the feeling that had been engendered throughout the loyal states in regard to the prosecution of the war and the suppression of the Rebellion.

Nothing more beautiful, nothing more just, nothing more appropriate could have been said than those memorable words of his second inaugural. And to those who seem to believe that all wars are iniquitous and any peace is desirable, who adhere to the form of words which says that the most ignoble peace is better than a noble war, I commend the consideration of these words:

“But let us judge not that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered—that of neither has been answered fully.

“The Almighty has his own purposes. ‘Woe unto the world because of offenses; for it must need be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh.’ If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which in the providence of God must needs come, but which having continued through his appointed time he now wills to remove, and that he gives to both the North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believer in a living God always ascribed to him? Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman’s 250 years of unrequited toil shall be sunk,

and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said 'the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.' " (Applause.)

"With malice towards none; with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the Nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all Nations."

It is something of a compliment after all these years to find that the Prime Minister of England in a recent address made his greatest point by the quotation of the words of the rail splitter of Illinois. (Applause.)

This mingled expression of determination and charity was uttered as the Confederacy was writhing in its last death struggle. Only a month or two more and Lee's veterans had surrendered to Grant's victorious army, and only a month or two more and Lincoln fell under the hands of the assassin. But when they were delivered, the calm, dispassionate tone, the perfect charity, the utter lack of compromise on the main issue, sounded like a trumpet call to duty on the part of those who believed in the extinction of the monster slavery and the preservation of a free Union. They expressed the fullness of the conviction on the part of this apostle of liberty which had begun its expression at Springfield, had been nurtured throughout the great debate, had been down into the valley of the shadow of death in the early years of the war, but

was then emerged triumphant and glorified in the success of the great principle for which the name of Lincoln stands. There was never a firmer or a more merciful conqueror. No man ever took the triumph of his cause with a greater sense of responsibility. No one could have been more just to those who had been his enemies. No one could have been more certain in carrying out the policies of himself and his advisers.

With those noble words so fraught with great results to both the North and South ringing in their ears, with victory accomplished, with slavery dead, with a pean of praise to the Almighty for his mercies to the Nation going up from every church and every hearthstone, came the story of the assassination. Hearts softened with pity for the sufferings of a brave enemy suddenly turned to stone. The words of amnesty that were upon the lips of thousands of patriotic citizens towards those whom they regarded as misguided during the war, turned into bitter words of condemnation and hate at the destruction of the great President. Nothing so untoward, nothing so unfortunate, both for the North and the South, nothing that could by any possibility have so estranged the sections, could have happened, save that.

The man in blue thought of the man in gray as a brave and honorable enemy. Each side received its wounds as a part of the natural result of warfare. Each side exulted in victory and mourned in defeat. Each cherished the memory of its martyred dead, and each hoped in the end to succeed. All this, although not without feeling, not without distress, not without condemnation, was yet not bitter, nor irreconcilable; but the bullet of the assassin changed it all and only

the mellowing influence of the years, and the feeling that only a small and inconsiderable portion of the enemy had sympathy with the foul plot for the destruction of the President, made possible the final reconciliation between the sections.

But the world has learned, in the first instance, from the success of the cause espoused by Lincoln and in the second place from a better knowledge of his motives, his actions and the results achieved by him, how to estimate and to appreciate his character. Today the name most inseparably connected with human liberty in the world is that of Abraham Lincoln. There is no bondman in the world anywhere, that does not know that the symbol of his deliverance, if it should ever come to him, is the name of Lincoln of Illinois. Other nations have their heroes, other countries have their liberators, but nowhere is there the name of one that so covers the earth with the abiding glory of its radiated power, as does that of Abraham Lincoln. (Applause.)

Some gleam of appreciation seems to have penetrated the European people before the shock of the assassination brought it home to them. The patriots and lovers of liberty at Rome, very shortly after the second election of Lincoln, sent to him a fragment from the wall of Servius Tullius with this inscription: "To Abraham Lincoln, President for the second time of the American Republic. Citizens of Rome present this stone from the wall of Servius Tullius by which the memory of each of those brave apostles of Liberty may be associated. Anno 1865."

Thus were linked together the great deliverer of the plebeians of Rome and the emancipator of the colored race.

The world awoke when it read the story of the tragedy of his death, to find that in spite of its ridicule, in spite of its caricature, in spite of its sympathy for the rebelling South, there was a real dignity and power in the homely man at Washington that they had recognized in a way all the while, but had only come to fully appreciate when the assassin's bullet had laid him low.

Perhaps as perfect an exhibition as any of this was shown in the famous poem of Tom Taylor, published in *Punch*, which publication had outrageously caricatured and reviled the President of the United States, which poem appeared almost immediately after his tragic death. In this poem the poet is supposed to be addressing *Punch*, which is personified. Says the poet:

You lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's bier,  
You, who, with mocking pencil went to trace  
Broad for the self-complacent British sneer  
His length of shambling limb, his furrowed face.

His gaunt, gnarled hands, his unkempt, bristling hair,  
His garb uncouth, his bearing ill at ease;  
His lack of all we prize as debonnair,  
Of power or will to shine, of art to please.

You, whose smart pen backed up the pencil's laugh,  
Judging each step, as though the way were plain;  
Reckless so it could point its paragraph  
Of Chief's perplexity or people's pain.

Beside this corpse, that bears for winding sheet  
The Stars and Stripes he lived to rear anew,  
Between the mourners at his head and feet,  
Say, scurril-jester, is there room for you?

And Punch is supposed to have replied to the poet :

Yes, he had lived to shame me from my sneer,  
To lame my pencil, and confute my pen—  
To make me own this hind of princes peer,  
This rail-splitter a true-born king of men.

My shallow judgment I had learnt to rue,  
Noting how to occasion's height he rose,  
How his quaint wit made home-truth seem more true,  
How, iron-like, his temper grew by blows.

How humble yet how hopeful he could be ;  
How in good fortune and in ill the same ;  
Nor bitter in success, nor boastful he,  
Thirsty for gold, nor feverish for fame.

He went about his work—such work as few  
Ever had laid on head and heart and hand—  
As one who knows where there's a task to do  
Man's honest will must heaven's good grace command.

So he went forth to battle on the side  
That he felt clear was liberty's and right's,  
As in his peasant boyhood he had plied  
His warfare with rude nature's thwarting might.

The uncleared forest, the unbroken soil,  
The iron trunk, that turns the lumberer's axe;  
The rapid, that o'erbears the boatman's toil,  
The prairie, hiding the mazed wanderer's tracks.

So he grew up, a destined work to do,  
And lived to do it; four long-suffering years,  
Ill-fate, ill-feeling, ill-report lived through,  
And then he heard the hisses change to cheers.

A felon hand, between the goal and him,  
Reached from behind his back, a trigger prest—  
And those perplexed and patient eyes were dim,  
Those gaunt, long-laboring limbs were laid to rest.

The words of mercy were upon his lips,  
Forgiveness in his heart and on his pen,  
When this vile murderer brought swift eclipse  
To thoughts of peace on earth, good will to men.

The Old World and the New, from sea to sea,  
Utter one voice of sympathy and shame!  
Sore heart, so stopped when it at last beat high,  
Sad life, cut short just as its triumph came.

To this tribute paid too late to affect the man  
whose life had been laid upon his country's altar, we  
Americans might add perhaps in humble paraphrase:

Thus sneering Britain when his life was done,  
Paid tardy tribute to his humble birth,  
And bowing meekly at his flag-draped bier  
Contritely owned him for his proven worth.



Today united, we who claim him as our own  
Here shed anew the tears his death recalls,  
While North and South alike with one accord  
Write high his name in fame's enduring halls.

We've lived to see the time when all the world  
Seeking the truths which lead towards freedom's  
flame,  
Breathed first a hope in God who gave them birth  
Then speaks with love the martyred Lincoln's  
name.

(Applause.)





Enoch M. McNamee



## SOME LETTERS OF LINCOLN'S

Caroline M. McIlvaine, Librarian, Chicago  
Historical Society

MEMBERS OF THE GRAND ARMY HALL AND MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: As Librarian of the Chicago Historical Society, of which Mr. Lincoln was an Honorary member, it has been my privilege to have in my keeping such letters of Lincoln as the Society possesses, and as a consequence have looked into the faces of some of the greatest disciples of Lincoln of our day who have made pilgrimage to this library because of a desire to see the words of the greatest American traced in his own characteristic handwriting.

Constant familiarity with the letters of Lincoln, far from making these slighter, or at least more intimate writings, seem common, has just the opposite effect. The more one studies his every written sentence the more one is impressed with his true thinking and his faultless expression. Indeed, so much of his best thought is buried in his correspondence that I have ventured to make a few of his letters the subject of this talk.

Aside from one year of actual schooling in his entire life he was self-taught. Once having acquired the ability to read, he devoured all the books within a radius of fifty miles of his home. It is said that he covered all the logs and boards in his vicinity with his cipherings and quotations from favorite authors. Nevertheless, every close student of the writings of Lincoln soon or late divines that Lincoln's perfection of style is due more to his passion for the truth than to any outside influence.

One wonders why a book made up entirely of letters and speeches of this master of matter and style is not furnished to the children of our schools. What better model could be had?

The earliest writing of Lincoln's that I have seen is dated in a large school-boy hand "March, 1826," when he was seventeen years of age. On sheets of foolscap he had copied Pike's Arithmetic in its entirety. The appearance of the pages would do credit to an expert book-keeper aside from the fact that he occasionally executed with many flourishes such sentiments as the following:

"Abraham Lincoln, his hand and pen,  
He will be good, but God knows when."

Only six years later, 1832, as a candidate for the Legislature he addressed his neighbors at New Salem as follows on the subject of Education:

"Upon the subject of education, not presuming to dictate any plan or system respecting it, I can only say that I view it as the most important subject which we, as a people, can be engaged in.

"That every man may receive at least a moderate education, and thereby be enabled to read the histories of his own and other countries, by which he may duly appreciate the value of our free institutions, appears to be an object of vital importance.

"Every man is said to have his peculiar ambition. Whether it be true or not, I can say, for one, that I have no other so great as that of being truly esteemed of my fellow-men. How far I shall succeed in gratifying this ambition is yet to be developed. I am young, and unknown to many of you. I was born, and have ever remained, in the most humble walks of life. I

have no wealthy popular relations or friends to recommend me. My case is thrown exclusively upon the independent voters of the country; and, if elected, they will have conferred a favor upon me, for which I shall be unremitting in my labors to compensate.

"But if the good people in their wisdom shall see fit to keep me in the background, I have been too familiar with disappointment to be very much chagrined."

He was defeated by Peter Cartright, the Methodist Circuit rider.

On the 28th day of April, 1832, Captain Abraham Lincoln's Company was mustered into the U. S. Army at Beardstown, Illinois, for service in the Black Hawk War and the mustering officer who countersigned the roll was Col. John J. Hardin, a hero of the Battle of Buena Vista. After a months' service, the company was mustered out by the same officer and remustered on May 27, 1832, the entire roll being written by the commanding officer and signed boldly "Abraham Lincoln, Capt."

Under the laws of the State, every able-bodied male inhabitant between eighteen and forty-five years of age was obliged to drill twice a year or pay a fine of one dollar. "As a dollar was hard to raise" says one old settler, "everybody drilled."

In his autobiography, Lincoln wrote in 1860, "Then came the Black Hawk War, and I was elected a captain of volunteers—a success which gave me more pleasure than any I have had since."

Naturally the company was a motley crowd, each man supplying his own equipment of flint-lock rifle, powder horn, etc., buckskin breeches and coon skin

caps prevailing by way of uniforms. The men more bent on driving out the Indians than observing military discipline were difficult to handle, and Lincoln, being entirely unfamiliar with military tactics, is said to have made many blunders. He was fond of relating afterward that on one occasion he was marching with a front of more than twenty men across a field, when he noticed a gateway through which they must pass into the next field.

"I could not for the life of me," said he, "remember the proper word of command for getting my company *endwise*, so that it could get through the gate, so I shouted, "This company is dismissed for two minutes, when it will fall in again on the other side of the gate!" (Laughter.) But none of these small difficulties injured his standing with the company who soon became so proud of his great strength and quick wit that they obeyed because they admired him.

Five short years after the young Captain had laid aside his flint-lock rifle, we find him delivering in Springfield the following oration on Free Institutions:

"In the great journal of things happening under the sun, we the American people, find our account running under date of the nineteenth century of the Christian era.

"We find ourselves in the peaceful possession of the fairest portion of the earth, as regards extent of territory, fertility of soil, and salubrity of climate.

"We find ourselves under the government of a system of political institutions conducing more essentially to the ends of civil and religious liberty than any of which the history of former times tells us.

"We, when mounting the stage of our existence,



found ourselves the legal inheritors of these fundamental blessings.

"We toiled not, in the acquisition or establishment of them; they are a legacy bequeathed us by a once hardy, brave, and patriotic, but now lamented and departed race of ancestors.

"Theirs was the task (and nobly they performed it) to possess themselves, and, through themselves, us, of this goodly land, and to uprear upon its hills and valleys a political edifice of liberty and equal rights; 'tis ours only to transmit these—the former unprofaned by the foot of an invader; the latter undecoyed by the lapse of time and untorn by usurpation, to the latest generation that fate shall permit the world to know.

"This task, gratitude to our fathers, justice to ourselves, duty to posterity—all imperatively require us faithfully to perform.

"How, then, shall we perform it? At what point shall we expect the approach of danger? Shall we expect some transatlantic military giant to step the ocean and crush us at a blow?

"Never. All the armies of Europe, Asia, and Africa combined, with all the treasure of the earth (our own excepted) in their military chest, with a Bonaparte for a commander, could not, by force, take a drink from the Ohio, or make a track on the Blue Ridge, in a trial of a thousand years.

"At what point, then, is the approach of danger to be expected? Answer: If it ever reaches us, it must spring *among us*.

"It cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher.

As a nation of freeman, we must live through all time, or die by suicide."

. One of the few letters written to women that have come to light is that to Mary Speed the sister of his close friend Joshua Speed. It is in part as follows:

Bloomington, Ill., Sept. 27, 1841.

Miss Mary Speed, Louisville, Ky.

Mr Friend: Having resolved to write to some of your mother's family and not having the express permission of any one of them to do so, I have had some little difficulty in determining on which to inflict the task of reading what I now feel must be a most dull and silly letter; but when I remembered that you and I were something of "cronies" while I was at Farmington; and that while there, I once was under the necessity of shutting you up in a room to prevent your committing an "assault and battery" upon me; I instantly decided that you should be the devoted one . . .

By the way, a fine example was presented on board the boat for contemplating the effect of *condition* upon human happiness.

A gentleman had purchased twelve negroes in different parts of Kentucky and was taking them to a farm in the South. They were chained six and six together; a small iron clevis was around the left wrist of each, and this fastened to the main chain by a shorter one at a convenient distance from the others; so that the negroes were strung together precisely like so many fish upon a trot-line.

In this condition they were being separated forever from the scenes of their childhood, their friends,

their fathers and mothers and brothers and sisters, and many of them from their wives and children, and going into perpetual slavery where the lash of the master is proverbially more ruthless and unrelenting than any otherwhere, and yet amid all these distressing circumstances, as *we* would think them, they were the most cheerful and happy creatures on board . . .

How true it is that: "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," or in other words, that he renders the worst of human conditions tolerable, while he permits the best to be nothing more than tolerable.

When we left, Miss Fannie Henning was owing you a visit as I understood. Has she paid it yet? If she has, are you not convinced that she is one of the sweetest girls in the world? There is but one thing about her, so far as I could perceive, that I would have otherwise than it is:

That is something of a tendency to melancholy. This, let it be observed, is a misfortune, not a fault. Give her an assurance of my very highest regard when you see her . . .

Your sincere friend,

A. LINCOLN.

One of a series of letters addressed to Judge Dummer, of Jacksonville, relates to the campaign for Congress:

Springfield, Nov. 18, 1845.

Friend Dummer: Before Baker left, he said to me, in accordance with what had long been an understanding between him and me that the track for the next congressional race was clear to me as far as he was concerned; and that he would say so publicly in any manner and at any time I might desire. I

said in reply, as to the manner and time I would consider a while and write him.

I understand friend Delahay to have already informed you of the substance of the above.

I now wish to say to you that if it be consistent with your feelings, you would set a few stakes for me—I do not certainly know, but I strongly suspect that General Hardin wishes to run again—I know of no argument to give me a preference over him, unless it be “Turn about is fair play.”

The Pekin paper has lately nominated or suggested Hardin’s name for Governor and the Alton paper, noticing that, indirectly nominates him for Congress. I wish you would, if you can, see that while these things are handed about among the papers, the Beardstown paper takes no stand that may injure my chance unless the conductor really prefers Gen. Hardin, in which case I suppose it would be fair.

Let this be confidential and please write me in a few days.

Yours as ever,

A. LINCOLN.

Hon. H. E. Dummer, Jacksonville, Ill.

The following letter to a young man who had inquired as to the possibility of reading law in Mr. Lincoln’s office seems a model in thought and expression:

Springfield, Nov. 5, 1855.

Isham Reavis, Esq.

My Dear Sir: I have just reached home, and found your letter of the 23rd ult. I am from home too much of my time for a young man to read law

with me advantageously. If you are resolutely determined to make a lawyer of yourself, the thing is more than half done already. It is but a small matter whether you read with anybody or not. I did not read with any one. Get the books, and read and study them till you understand them in their principal features; and that is the main thing. It is of no consequence to be in a large town while you are reading. I read at New Salem, which never had three hundred people living in it. The books, and your capacity for understanding them, are just the same in all places. Mr. Dummer is a very clever man and an excellent lawyer (much better than I, in law-learning); and I have no doubt he will cheerfully tell you what books to read, and also loan you the books.

Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed, is more important than any other one thing.

Very truly your friend,

A. LINCOLN.

Hon. H. E. Dummer, Jacksonville, Ill.

A letter of deep significance as exhibiting the sense of power Lincoln possessed, and one that has never before been printed, is that to the Congressman from Illinois, Hon. Isaac N. Arnold. President Lincoln said in part:

Private and Confidential.

Executive Mansion, Washington, May 26, 1863.

Hon. I. N. Arnold:

My Dear Sir: Your letter advising me to dismiss Gen. Halleck is received. If the public believe, as you say, that he has driven Fremont, Butler, and Sigel

from the service, they believe what I know to be false; so that if I was to yield to it, it would only be to be instantly bent by some other demand based on another falsehood equally gross. You know yourself that Fremont was relieved at his own request, before Halleck could have had anything to do with it—went out near the end of June, while Halleck only came in near the end of July. I know equally well that no wish of Halleck's had anything to do with the removal of Butler or Sigel. Sigel, like Fremont, was relieved at his own request, pressed upon me almost constantly for six months, and upon complaint that could have been made as justly by almost any corps commander in the army, even more justly by some. So much for the way they got out. Now a word as to their not getting back. In the early spring Gen. Fremont sought active service again; and, as it seemed to me, sought it in a very good and reasonable spirit. But he holds the highest rank in the army, except McClellan, so that I could not well offer him a subordinate command. Was I to displace Hooker, or Hunter, or Rosecrans, or Grant, or Banks? If not, what was I to do? And, similar to this, is the case of both the others. One month after Gen. Butler's return, I offered him a position in which I thought and still think he could have done himself the highest credit, and the country the greatest service, but he declined it. When Gen. Sigel was relieved, at his own request, as I have said, of course, I had to put another in command of his corps. Can I instantly thrust out that other one to put him in again?

And now my good friend, let me turn your eyes upon another point. Whether Gen. Grant shall or shall not command the capture of Vicksburg, his cam-

paign from the beginning of the month up to the twenty-second day of it, is one of the most brilliant in the world. His corps commanders and division commanders, in part, are McClernand, McPherson, Sherman, Steele, Hovey, Blair and Logan. And yet taking Gen. Grant and these seven of his generals, even you can scarcely name one of them that has not been constantly denounced even opposed by the same men who are now so anxious to get Halleck out, and Fremont and Butler and Sigel in. I believe no one of them went through the Senate easily, and certainly one failed to get through at all. I am compelled to take a more impartial and unprejudiced view of things. Without claiming to be your superior, which I do not, my position enables me to understand my duty in all these matters better than you possibly can, and I hope you do not doubt my integrity.

Your friend as ever,

(Signed) A. LINCOLN.

Where shall we find a more graceful or a briefer letter than Lincoln's to Douglas dated:

Springfield, July 31, 1858.

Hon. S. A. Douglas:

Dear Sir: Yours of yesterday naming places, times and terms for joint discussion between us was received this morning. Although, by the terms, as you propose, you take *four* openings and closes to my *three*, I accede, and thus close the arrangement. I direct this to you at Hillsboro; and shall try to have both your letters and this appear in the *Journal* and *Register* of Monday morning.

Your Abt. Servt.

A. LINCOLN.

Writing to Dr. C. H. Ray, editor of the *Chicago Tribune* under date of November 20, 1858, to ask him to secure for him copies of the *Tribune* containing reports of the Joint Debates, he finished with the words:

"Douglas managed to be supported by both parties as the best instrument to *put down* and to *uphold* the slave power; but no ingenuity can long keep the antagonism in harmony."

Asked for his autograph he wrote March 22, 1864:

I never knew a man who wished to be himself a slave. Consider if you know any good thing, that no man desires for himself.

A. LINCOLN.

And in the same year:

"In this extraordinary war extraordinary developments have manifested themselves, such as have not been seen in former wars; and, among these manifestations, nothing has been more remarkable than these fairs for the relief of suffering soldiers and their families, and the chief agents in these fairs are the women of America:

"I am not accustomed to the use of language of eulogy; I have never studied the art of paying compliments to women, but I must say that, if all that has been said by orators and poets since the creation of the world in praise of women were applied to the women of America, it would not do them justice for their conduct during the war.

"I will close by saying, God bless the women of America!"



Words worn threadbare by careless usage, under his sincere pen attained their original dignity.

Nov. 21, 1864.

To Mrs. Bixby, of Boston, Mass.:

I have been shown on the file of the War Department a statement of the adjutant general of Massachusetts, that you are the mother of five sons who died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming; but I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the republic they died to save.

I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours very sincerely and respectfully,

A. LINCOLN.

For words of sympathy, Lincoln seems to have drawn from a well so deep that it was inexhaustible for his letters of condolence exceed in tenderness and dignity, every other except the Man of Gallilee.

Washington, D. C., May 25, 1861.

To the Father and Mother of Col. Elmer E. Ellsworth:

My Dear Sir and Madam: In the untimely loss of your noble son, our affliction here, is scarcely less than your own. So much of promised usefulness to one's country, and of bright hope, for one's self and friends, have rarely been so suddenly dashed, as

in his fall. In size, in years, and in youthful appearance, a boy only, his power to command men, was surpassingly great. This power, combined with a fine intellect, and indomitable energy, and a taste altogether military, constituted in him, as seemed to me, the best national talent, in that department, I ever knew. And yet he was singularly modest and deferential in social intercourse. My acquaintance with him began less than two years ago; yet through the latter half of the intervening period, it was as intimate as the disparity of our ages, and my engrossing engagements, would permit. To me, he appeared to have no indulgences or pastimes; and I never heard him utter a profane, or an intemperate word. What was conclusive of his good heart, he never forgot his parents. The honors he labored for so laudably, and, in the sad end, so gallantly gave his life for, he meant for them, no less than for himself.

In the hope that it may be no intrusion upon the sacredness of your sorrow, I have ventured to address you this tribute to the memory of my young friend, and your brave and early fallen child.

May God give you that consolation which is beyond all earthly power.

Sincerely your friend in a common affliction,

A. LINCOLN.

Anniversary after anniversary of Lincoln's birth comes and passes leaving a greater and greater body of people studying the words of this self-taught man with ever increasing reverence for their authority. So in a degree the language as well as the ideals of the whole Nation is being moulded on his lines. And

not alone are this Nation's language and ideals being moulded by the Lincoln spirit, but recently, in another hemisphere statesmen in hours of crucial stress, have more than once had recourse to the words of Lincoln to express the creeds of Nations now at war with one another. God speed the day when this bond of unity shall be perceived.

The following letter in which Lincoln quotes from his second inaugural address may fitly close this address:

Executive Mansion,  
Washington, March 20, 1865.

Mrs. Amanda H. Hall:

Madam: Induced by a letter of yours to your brother, and shown me by him, I send you what follows below:

Respectfully,  
A. LINCOLN.

"Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said:

"The judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.'"

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.







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